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## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SOMALIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

BY

COLONEL ABDULKADIR DINI, SOMALIA

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Somali and the surrounding region is truly an area where East meets West. It is in this strategically important area that Soviet and U.S. interests collide. Somalia is one of the United States' few friends in the area that allows the U.S. long term basing rights for naval and air force presence. It is the "vacuum" created by the Somalian expulsion of their Soviet advisers in 1980 that allowed the U.S. to establish a firm presence in the region.

There are many difficulties in the region between Somali and her neighbors. These external regional conflicts as well as the internal problems in Somalia caused the U.S. to reassess its assistance program in Somalia. The suspension of security assistance due to the alleged human rights violations by the Somalian government has undermined the military capability of the Somali army to deal with insurgents or regional enemies. So it is a cycle--no aid, the Somali army grows weaker, the Somalian enemies get more bold, the enemies encourage insurgencies, insurgencies cause human rights problems, human rights problems means no aid. The lack of U.S. aid leaves Somalia more vulnerable to regional, Soviet-backed aggression.

In conclusion, the U.S. interest in Somalia and the surrounding region must not be dictated by limited special interest groups and bureaucratic elements in the U.S. government. Somalia wants to be a friend of the United States and to provide a stable nation in a volatile region. The United States must take a "long term" view of its relations with Somalia and not be shortsighted.

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
FOR SOMALIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Colonel Abdulkadir Dini, Somalia

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U.S. Army War College  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013  
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## ABSTRACT

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The key U.S. interests in this area are to counter Soviet influence, insure the uninterrupted flow of oil to international markets and establish more stable and democratic political climate. Somalia, with its geo-strategic location astride the Horn of Africa, is a vital land area to the U.S. presence in the region, controlling the entrance to the Red Sea and in close proximity to the Straits of Hormuz. Specifically in regard to Somalia, the U.S. objectives are to provide Somali self-defense capability against regional aggression and to assist Somalia to enhance its ability to maintain its military equipment. Since its inception in 1980 the annual dollars of security assistance has varied from \$376,000 in 1981 to \$1,091,000 in 1986. The 1988 assistance plan calls for \$989,000 in IMET funds.

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In conclusion, the U.S. interest in Somalia and the surrounding region must not be dictated by limited special interest groups and bureaucratic elements in the U.S. government. Somalia wants to be a friend of the United States and to provide a stable nation in a volatile region. The United States must take a "long term" view of its relations with Somalia and not be shortsighted.



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT . . . . .	ii
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
ORIGIN OF U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA . . . . .	1
DEVELOPMENT OF U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA . . . . .	3
SOMALIA'S RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE . . . . .	5
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS FOR CHANGES IN U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE . . . . .	7
RESTRICTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND THE RESULTING IMPLICATIONS . . . . .	9
SOMALI MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPROVE U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA . . . . .	10
CONCLUSION . . . . .	13
RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	13
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	16
APPENDIX I - GENERAL INFORMATION ON SOMALIA . . . . .	I-1
APPENDIX II - SOMALI HISTORY . . . . .	II-1

## INTRODUCTION

This paper will introduce the origins and development of U.S. security assistance to Somalia. Furthermore, it will describe Somalia's rationale and justification for U.S. security assistance, political and economic reasons for changes in U.S. security assistance, as well as restrictions associated with this assistance, and the resulting implications. I will also describe the measures to be taken to improve U.S. security assistance, conclusions I have reached, and some recommendations I have formulated concerning this U.S. security assistance to my nation.

## ORIGIN OF U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA

As a superpower, the United States has global strategic interests vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. The Horn of Africa constitutes an integral part of the "super complex" of the Middle East. Therefore, the American presence in Ethiopia after World War II was meant to protect vital U.S. political, economical, and strategic interests in the region: the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Geopolitically, the Horn of Africa is part and parcel of the Middle East. What makes the Horn of Africa strategic is its location as a crossroad of searoutes connecting the Red Sea, Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, and the Persian Gulf. It also contains the Bab-ul-Mendab Strait which controls the entrances to the Red Sea and its close proximity to the Strait of Hormuz. The flow of



oil, strategic minerals, and the international trade pass closely to the shores of Somalia. Further, the United States, as the leader of the free world, has a stated national interest and obligation to protect the uninterrupted flow of these vital items to Japan and the Western European countries and the rest of the Free World.<sup>1</sup>

In order to fulfill such obligations, the United States needs to maintain a forward presence in the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Gulf. This presence will maintain stability in the region and off-set Soviet intervention or expansion in the area. This was evidenced by the United States presence in Ethiopia for a long period. However, when Emperor Haile-Sellassie was overthrown by the radical Marxist regime, the United States had no choice but to leave Ethiopia. At the same time, the Warsaw-Pact countries, spearheaded by the Soviet Union and Cuba, jumped in blindly to fill the vacuum left by the Americans in Ethiopia. Consequently, they got involved in the Ogaden conflict, which was really a conflict between the National Liberation Movement and the Ethiopian Empire state. Besides security assistance and actively participating in combat operations waged against the Somalis, the Soviets established bases and military facilities in Assab, the Dahlak Islands, Mussawa, Asmara, and other parts of Ethiopia. Furthermore, the Soviets and Cubans were well established in South Yemen. This presence and build-up of the Soviet military power and the presence of Cuban proxy forces in the region posed a serious threat to both the United States and its allies' interests, globally and regionally.

In order to offset and counter the Soviet expansion and threat to the region, the Carter administration decided to win the friendship of Somalia. Because of the massive Soviet assistance and support for Ethiopia, Somalia abrogated the treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union on November 13, 1977. This bold step on the part of Somalia opened a new chapter for the renewal of U.S.-Somali cooperation.

Apart from Soviet expansion in the Horn of Africa, the Soviets also took advantage of the fall of the Shah in Iran and their subsequent invasion of Afghanistan to expand their base. At that stage, the United States realized the urgent need for presence in Somalia in order to protect its vital interests in the region, especially in Somalia itself and the Persian Gulf Arab countries.

Somalia became one of the countries threatened by the Soviet, Cuban, and Warsaw Pact forces present in Ethiopia. In order to balance the equilibrium of security assistance, maintain stability in the region, and offset any further Soviet expansion, the United States and Somalia signed a modest security and economic agreement in August 1980.<sup>2</sup>

#### DEVELOPMENT OF U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA

The United States has several security interests in the country of Somalia. Somalia's strategic location at the top of the Horn of Africa makes it very important for the U.S. military to have access to Somali air and port facilities. In addition, that access is important to support U.S. security policies in the

Indian Ocean and Red Sea. It could prove vital as a support area for U.S. forces responding to contingencies in the Persian (Arabian) Gulf.<sup>3</sup>

U.S. objectives in Somalia are to provide self-defense capabilities against regional aggression and to strengthen Somali abilities to maintain military equipment. Military security assistance (in thousands of dollars) to Somalia since the 1980 agreement is as follows:

CHART 1

	(in Thousands of Dollars)								
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
IMET*	0	356	445	504	1,023	1,096	1,091	665	989
FMS**	20	20	10	10	0	0	0	0	0
MMF***	0	0	15	15	32	33	19,149	7,500	5,560 <sup>4</sup>

\*International Military Education and Training Program

\*\*Foreign Military Sales Financing Program

\*\*\*Map Merger Funds

In addition to the above support, the United States also provided lethal and nonlethal military materials during the period (see Chart 2). None of the support, however, was capable of reducing the insurgent threat to the region. Because of this, northern Somalia was vulnerable to attack by insurgents who were backed by Ethiopia and its allies. Somalia lost its self-defense capabilities against regional aggression.

## CHART 2

## Major Security Assistance Purchases - Somalia

DELIVERED

<u>Item</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
4x4 Chevy Blazer Truck	6
M151A2 1/4 Ton Utility Truck	60
M825 1/4 Ton Utility Truck	63
M35A2 2 1/2 Ton Cargo Truck	106
M813A1 5 Ton Cargo Truck	42
M816 5 Ton Wrecker	2
M149A2 1 1/2 Ton Water Trailer	20
M113A1 Armored Personnel Carrier (TOW)	24
Road Grader	3
M16A1 5.56mm Rifle	4,800
.50 Cal Machine Gun	24
M0A2 106mm Recoilless Rifle	59
M29A1 81mm Mortar	75
M198 155mm Towed Howitzer	18
M79 40mm Grenade Launcher	150
TOW Launchers	24
TOW Missiles	480
M151A2 Jeep w/106mm Recoilless Rifles	25
M818 5 Ton Truck	2
M151A2 Jeeps	48
10 Ton Wheeled Crane	2
M35A2 2 1/2 Ton Truck w/w	21

UNDELIVERED

<u>Item</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Forecast</u>
106mm Recoilless Rifles	48	Unscheduled
Contact Maintenance Shop Set	3	2Q FY90
22 1/2 Ton Semi Trailers	4	4Q FY89
M35A2 2 1/2 Ton Truck w/o Winch	21	3Q FY89 <sup>5</sup>

SOMALIA'S RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION  
FOR U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE

Ethiopia has always been a threat to Somalia's national security and its survival as an independent sovereign state in the Horn of Africa. The rulers of Ethiopia (Menelik, Haile-Seilase, and Mengetsu) have been obsessed with destroying the emergence and existence of an independent Somali state. For this

reason, Somali needed to develop the defensive capabilities of its armed forces to safeguard its existence. One must also remember that there has been a huge, constant flow of sophisticated Soviet armament and equipment worth more than four billion dollars into Ethiopia. This arming of Somalia's neighbors, coupled with the presence of Soviet, East German, South Yemen and Cuban troops in Ethiopia, threaten the existence of Somalia as a sovereign nation.<sup>6</sup>

Soviet military advisers and technical personnel present in Ethiopia are estimated to be 4,200. East Germany has about 3,000 advisers manning the country's security apparatus, and the Cubans have about 17,000 combat soldiers in Ethiopia. The Ethiopians have been spending about \$500 million annually on defense and have the third largest armed force in Africa, after Egypt and Nigeria. The army consists of 22 infantry divisions (3 motorized battalions, 4 mountain battalions, 3 light battalions, and about 20 tank battalions), 4 parachute/commando brigades, 50 artillery battalions, and 28 air defense battalions. Their Army is equipped with tanks, armored personnel carriers, howitzers, guns, helicopters, anti-aircraft guns and rockets, an estimated 1,500 mortar/artillery pieces, nearly 1,000 tanks and self-propelled guns, and 1,000 armored personnel carriers (APCs) and armored reconnaissance vehicles (ARVs). In addition, the Ethiopian Air Force is equipped with more than 100 supersonic fighter aircraft, and the navy has its own ships. Ethiopian armed forces personnel consists of 300,000 army personnel, 3,000 navy personnel, and

about 4,000 air force personnel, with approximately 200,000 in their paramilitary reserve forces.<sup>7</sup>

These huge forces threaten Somalia and provide the rationale and justification for U.S. security assistance to Somalia.

#### POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS FOR CHANGES IN U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE

Both superpowers are experiencing chronic budget deficits which have led to a diminishing commitment of resources worldwide. The rapprochement of the two superpowers led to their common concern about regional conflicts. In order to lessen competition, both superpowers arrived at a common consensus that would decrease regional tensions. They agreed to the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola, linked to the independence of Namibia. Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan, and Vietnamese troops withdrew from Cambodia. In the Horn of Africa, the two superpowers agreed to work toward dissolving the persistent war in the region.

Meanwhile, the United States wanted to improve their relationship with Ethiopia, especially after the failure of the recently attempted coup. Former U.S. President Carter went to Ethiopia to mediate between the opposition groups and the government.

The United States consistently has stated its concern about human rights violations within the region. These alleged human rights abuses in Somalia were orchestrated by certain elements in the media who wanted to advocate the regionalist approach in U.S. foreign policy vis-a-vis the globalist approach. Such groups minimize the vital strategic importance of Somalia to U.S.

security interests in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. They also advocate the notion of sea bases rather than land bases. The negative aspect of this formula could be traced to the failed attempt to rescue the hostages in Iran in April 1980, or the recent Persian Gulf war where the U.S. forces found a need for permanent secure land bases.

As far as the alleged human rights violations in Somalia are concerned, the U.S. Congress and the Administration recently decided to cease some economic and military assistance to Somalia based on highly exaggerated disinformation which was intended to undermine U.S.-Somali relations. Moreover, this decision was premature and unilateral on the part of the U.S. Government. These alleged consequences of the problems in northern Somalia must be viewed in the context of the overall Ethiopia-Somali conflict in the region. The armed insurgents who attacked the northern part of Somalia in May 1988 were trained, armed, and organized by the Ethiopians, with the entire support of the Soviets and Cubans in order to destabilize the Somali government and cut Somalia into several parts. Having failed in their primary objective, the insurgents gave prominence to external propaganda, accusing Somalia of human rights violations. Every nation has an obligation to safeguard its sovereignty and national unity. The real violators of human rights are the insurgents who initiated the destruction of public and private property and the loss of civilian lives. In such tragic and unfortunate situations, the civilian population will always suffer as evidenced in the U.S. invasion of Panama. However, the Somali government and its people

are determined to heal these wounds because the Somali people are the only homogeneous entity in the region.

The continued conflict in the north is not of Somalia's making but rather the continuation of support and backing for the insurgents by Ethiopia and its allies. This insurgency fulfills its major strategic objective of Ethiopia, making Somalia weak and permanently destabilized.

#### RESTRICTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND THE RESULTING IMPLICATIONS

The United States denied Somalia the armaments and equipment (planes, tanks, etc.) necessary for its legitimate defense. Maintenance of its existing defensive capabilities has been curtailed by requisition and delivery of supplies slowed to a point where the length of time needed to request material and then receive delivery takes approximately a year. In that period, the cost of the equipment/supplies changed many times due to growing inflation in the various countries. Further, in 1988 the U.S. government imposed further restrictions by refusing to sell lethal items to Somalia. The United States is now acting unilaterally in not fulfilling its obligations under the security and economic assistance agreement made with Somalia in 1980, while Somalia has remained steady in meeting its obligations.

This has caused weakening of Somali defense capability, ill will toward the United States, and may cause permanent loss of presence of U.S. interests.



SOMALI MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPROVE  
U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA

The Somali government has taken every possible action to improve U.S.-Somali relations based on cooperation, collaboration and mutual respect. In 1989 alone, the Somali government has taken the following positive steps:

1. Practically all political prisoners have been released through presidential amnesty.
2. Liberal economic measures have been enacted.
3. A new agreement has been reached with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for reconstructing the Somali economy despite the difficult conditions attached to such reforms.
4. A multiparty system has been instituted and the Somali government is in the process of implementing this decision. The President said, "We are ready to implement the political readjustment program, for we envision that it is in the interest of the nation." (From his speech delivered on the 20th anniversary of the revolution, October 21, 1989.)
5. Within one year, there will be a parliamentary election, free for any Somali to contest.

A committee on the national level will be formed for the preparation of the patterns on which these parties will be opened, on electoral laws, the amendment of the constitution, and other related issues. These parties will be fully independent in their management, organization, and will prepare themselves to

democratically compete in governing the country, safeguarding the aspirations of the people, their national unity and sovereignty.

Amendments of articles and some concepts that are not incompatible with the new political program are imperative. The amendments should further strengthen the unity of the Somali people, national sovereignty, and individual rights. A general debate and discussion on a national scale, prior to the formation of the above committee, provided for participation of the various sectors of society to discuss and consult modes of opening the political parties, the preparation of the electoral laws and regulations, and other issues related to the well-being of the Somali people and their country.

The president has called on all opposition groups for open dialogue anywhere, anytime, without any preconditions. In addition, the president said, "We are ready to talk with them as we would with anyone who is concerned with the preservation of our unity, security, and the realization of development and progress for the Somali people." The Somali government is working toward solving the political and socio-economic problems existing in the country. Somalia wishes to achieve a viable solution consistent with the values and aspirations of the Somali nation.<sup>8</sup>

Somali is exerting great efforts to have good relations with neighboring countries. Relations based on peace, cooperation, and good neighborliness have been crowned with success and is reflected by the developing relations on differing governmental and social levels. Somalia wants to resolve the misunderstandings and disputes between nations by peaceful means on the basis of

just negotiations. The Somali government invited many people to visit Somalia in order to discover the true political situation in the country, the real truth, and allowed them to go anywhere and investigate. They were given the opportunity to discover that the news items and articles that mentioned the Somali situation were based on lies and rumors. Furthermore, the representatives of other nations were not restricted in their movements. They were allowed to contact and question without interference so that they could discover the truth. The majority were satisfied as to the truth of the political situation and the status of human rights in Somalia.

It is unfortunate that propaganda causing exaggeration, continues to distort reality with regard to human rights violations. The modern media has become a lethal weapon when used to achieve personal goals. Some countries back insurgencies aimed at Somalia, and they help develop the propaganda. Most of this propaganda is based on nonexistent issues and is simply disinformation. Both the Somali people and the government need to get the support and understanding of friendly governments.

Since the mutual agreement of 1980 between the Somali government and the United States, Somali has respected that agreement and fosters the relationship between the two countries. In addition, the United States is using Somali's ports, both air and sea, without conditions. Both nations' armed forces execute exercises every year in Somalia. But the United States has taken unilateral action to reduce security assistance to Somalia. It would be better if the United States took measures to improve U.S.

security assistance to Somalia, because Somalia has continued to take every possible action to support their agreement.

### CONCLUSION

U.S. policy makers should be prudent and not arrive at hasty decisions that would jeopardize U.S. presence and subsequently U.S. goals and interests in Somalia. U.S. security assistance to Somalia was very modest, dwindling year after year. The assistance had little impact on the overall defense capabilities of Somalia. What the Somali government and people cherish most is the friendship and linkage it has created between the U.S. government and its people. To this day, the Somali government and people are willing to continue the cooperative relations with the United States for the common good of the two nations. Unfortunately, it seems that the U.S. government is heeding the short-sighted policies of some elements within the Administration and the media. These groups have "hijacked" the formulation of U.S. policy toward Somalia in order to enhance their particular political interests.

Is it prudent for the U.S. national interest in the region to be subordinated to narrow goals of individual interest groups and bureaucratic elements within the Administration?

### RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear that Somalia needs U.S. security assistance. In addition to the two governments' mutual agreement in 1980, the United States promised to provide Somalia with the self-defense

capabilities it needed to protect itself against regional aggression, strengthen Somali abilities to maintain and sustain military equipment and provide economic support. Somalia is still willing to cooperate with the United States, but the United States has to change its decisions concerning the reduction of security assistance to Somalia and support Somalia in accordance with the 1980 agreement.

There is no regional balance of power. Relative power between Somalia and Ethiopia is not even close. Therefore, Somalia needs to obtain small arms, artillery, armored personnel carriers, tanks, airplanes (both fighters and transportation), and ammunitions, from the United States. We must have at least enough to defend our country.

#### ENDNOTES

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6. Marina Ottaway, Soviet and American Influence in the Horn of Africa, 1982, pp. 139-140.

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APPENDIX I  
GENERAL INFORMATION ON SOMALIA<sup>1</sup>

The Somali Democratic Republic comprises the former British Somaliland and the 10-year United Nations Trusteeship of ex-Italian Somaliland which united with it on July 1, 1960. It is a constitutional Socialist Republic with one party (the Somali Socialist Revolutionary Party) which was founded on July 1, 1976.

The Somali Democratic Republic is a member of the United Nations, the Non-Allied Organization, the Organization of African Unity, and the Arab League. It is also an associate member of the European Economic Community (EEC).

Location

The Somali Democratic Republic is situated in the Horn of Africa. It lies between Latitude 11°30' north and 1°30' south. On the west it is bounded by Western Somalia, northwest by the Republic of Djibouti, north by the state of Aden, on the east and south by the Indian Ocean, and on the southwest by Kenya. The coastline stretches for about 3,330 kilometers and is the longest in independent Africa.

Area

The total area of the Somali Democratic Republic is about 638,000 square kilometers, of which 8.2 million hectares are suitable for cultivation and 38.8 million hectares for livestock.

Population

The population of the Somali Democratic Republic is 5.3 million, of which 51 percent are nomads, 23 percent rural-settled farmers, and 26 percent urban dwellers.



### Density

The population density in 1982 was 8.3 persons per square kilometer.

### Climate

The year is divided into dry, hot and rainy periods:

- January-March - hot and dry period;
- April-June - rainy season;
- July-September - cool, dry weather; and
- October-December - period of light rain.

The rainfall and temperatures vary considerably from season to season. The average annual rainfall is 600 mm along the coasts, and 400-600 mm in Hargeisa, reaching 1,300 inches in the high mountains of Erigavo and Borama districts. Temperatures range from local forests on the plateau to over 25 degrees in the plains, from January to March.

### Main Rivers

There are two perennial rivers in the country: Jubba and Shabelle. The length of Jubba is 800 km and that of Shabelle is 1,100 km. Their catchment areas are 275,000 square km for Jubba and 300,000 square km for Shabelle. The average annual flow of Jubba is 6 billion cubic meters, while that of Shabelle is 2 billion cubic meters.

### Livestock

The livestock population of Somalia was estimated in 1975 to be about 34.7 million, of which 3.7 million were cattle, 5.3 million were camels, 9.4 million were sheep, and 15.3 million were goats.

### Agriculture

Agriculture is one of Somalia's most important sources of production. About one-fifth of the population is engaged in crop production activities, of which 80 percent is on a subsistence basis. Aside from the staples of maize and sorghum, the major crops are bananas, sugar, oil-seeds, cotton, rice, fruits, and vegetables. The total area of the country consists of about 63.8 million hectares, of which nearly 13 percent is suitable for crops, 45 percent for grazing, and the remainder is nonagricultural land. Only one-tenth of the land suitable for crops is utilized at present.

### Industry

The main industries are SOMALTEX, SNAI sugar factory, Jubba sugar complex, cigarette and match making, fish and meat canning, leather and footwear products, aluminum utensils, packaging materials, petroleum refinery, and pasta and flour mills.

### Capital

The capital of the Somali Democratic Republic is Mogadishu, with a population of around 800,000.

### Other Principal Towns

Other principal towns are Hargeisa, Kisimaio, Burao, Galcaio, Merca, Bosaso, Jowhar, Beletweyne, Brava, Baldoa, Berbera and Erigavo.

### Language

Somali and Arabic are the official languages. English and Italian are widely spoken and used in business.

Religion

The people are 100 percent Moslim.<sup>2</sup>

ENDNOTES

1. HEEGAN, A Weekly English Publication of the Ministry of Information, National Guidance and Tourism, October 1989, p. 6.

2. Somali Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report 1986, pp. 7-8.

## APPENDIX II

### SOMALI HISTORY

Somali history has its roots in the very ancient past. The early Somali population succeeded in creating trade links with areas of the greatest civilizations in the old world. This was recorded by the visits of many historians who wrote about the Somali coasts, registering their impressions in several ways; from writings to artists who depicted these visits in the ancient drawings of the old world.

The Somali coasts have been well-known for producing three important items in world trade: frankincense, ivory, and crocodile skin. Frankincense has been listed as the most-liked item by the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations. Cape Guardafui was known in ancient times as the Horn of Spices, but ivory was considered a very important item in the list of African goods. Because the African elephant was the first source of the trade all over the world, Somalia occupied a very important old-world trade link.

In ancient times Somalia was known by different names by many different peoples, including the Hebrews. The Pharaonic Egyptians called it the "Land of Punt." The Phoenicians knew the region well from time immemorial; their navigators called it the "Region of Incense." The Romans named it "Terra Incognita" or the "Unknown Land." The Greeks, on the other hand, named it the "Aromatic Land."

An old historical tablet written 5,000 years ago mentions the first Egyptian trade mission from the Red Sea to Puntland, from

which they received important merchandise of frankincense, myrrh, gold, ivory, leopard skins, cinnamon, sea-turtle carapace, and other goods. Myrrh and incense were used in their temples to embalm their dead and the other items were used for decoration in the palaces of their kings and pharaohs. Historical sources say that Ramses III established a large fleet in the Red Sea to make permanent visits to Puntland. After Ramses, Queen Hatshepsut (the fourth monarch of the 18th Egyptian dynasty) made a landmark expedition to Puntland, which is recorded on the walls of Deir Albahar, a temple located in Alexandria. Herodot, the father of history, mentions that Nikhon, another Egyptian monarch, made a similar expedition to Puntland in the year 613 B.C., staying in Somalia for three years on a fact-finding mission. Some historians believe that this mission took them around the African continent.

The Pre-Arab inhabitants are considered to be the first traders who reached the African coasts, including that of Somalia. For approximately 3,000 years, early history of the East and the Horn of Africa was linked strongly and continuously with the Pre-Arabs. Since then, there were kith-and-kin relations between the Arabs and Somali coastal people and an exchange of commodities between Arab and Somali tradesmen. These commercial relations continued to flourish, allowing the expansion of deeper historical and commercial ties. The Arabs sent their fleets every year to the East-African coasts. Undoubtedly, they had established several settlements around the eastern African coasts, especially

in the interior areas beside the sea or in the mountains which seem to fall on the sea.

It is interesting to note that both the Greeks and Romans were familiar with the land of Punt known as Berbera. Their sailors on the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean paid frequent visits to the ports of the coastal towns of Somalia for the purpose of commerce, and for exchanging ideas or advice with Somali sailors about navigational conditions in the two seas. Therefore, many chronicles and books were written by both Greek and Roman authors such as Herodotus, Hecataeus, Hippalus and Strabo, describing the general conditions of the Somali coast, particularly the ports and the coastal trade centers.

In the year 45 A.D. the Roman sailor Hippalus sailed across the Red Sea, passed through Bab-Mandeb, reached Cape Guardafui, and then on into the Indian Ocean. He was fortunate enough to understand the seasonal changes in the monsoon of the east-north and south-west winds. This new discovery spread to the whole Roman empire and from there to the European traders. Sailors from all these regions now appeared in the Indian Ocean waterways and ports.

One of the most outstanding books about the Somali Peninsula was written about 40 A.D. under the title of The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea and amply described the conditions of trade. It gave an account of the commercial relation of the Somali Peninsula with the outside world. The first phrase relating to the Somali coast facing toward the Indian Ocean reads "Behind this place the sea looks to you; to the south, there is a big market; and then

Cape of Spices in the peak of the solid hill which seems to fall to the Sea." In this book the author, a Greek merchant of Alexandria, described other ports of Somali Peninsula such as Zeila, Malao (now Berbera), and Mundo (near Bosaso).

Strabone, a Greek geographer of Amaser (66-24 B.C.) wrote 17 books of geography and also an account of Bab-el-Mandeb, the entrance to the Red Sea. He said that people who passed the area carrying cargos of dates travelled with "Cape Dira" which signal the land of "Aroms"; a region which has lions and elephants and mountains which seem to fall to the sea. Similar accounts were recorded by another writer, Ptolemy, who wrote books on geography.

During the 7th Century A.D., Islam spread throughout the Somali Peninsula. This meant the proliferation of information about Somalia and their country among the Arabs. Also, it meant the expansion of their influence in the area. As a matter of fact, Islam came to Somalia before its dissemination in Madina.

The importance of the flourishing commerce in the Somali Peninsula made it imperative for far-off nations such as China, Sri Lanka, and India to trade with it. China used to import from Somalia such diverse items as livestock, clothes, and spices.

The above-mentioned evidence gives ample proof of the existence since time immemorial of an independent and prosperous Somali nation in this part of the world. The main cities of commercial and cultural value were Harar (now under Abyssinian domination), Zeila, Berbera, Mogadishu, Maka, and Brava; however, the chief political centers were Zeila in the north and Mogadishu in the south. They defended the Somali country against invasions by

Portuguese invaders and by various Ethiopian kings. One of the great heroes of history during these wars was the Somali leader, Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim, better known as Ahmed Gurey (the left-handed), whose organized military forces repulsed Abyssinian attacks as well as the combined forces of Abyssinia and Portugal between 1528-1542. After a decisive battle, he captured large tracts of the Ethiopian highlands and killed the Emperor of Ethiopia. The Ethiopians appealed for further Portuguese military help, and in 1542 Ahmed Gurey was killed in battle.

In 1866 the independence of the Somali nation was destroyed. During the 16th century Turkey expanded into the area around the Red Sea. At this time Portugal was the only European rival that wanted to challenge Turkish domination of the Red Sea and its flourishing trade. In the 19th Century Turkey empowered the Khedive of Egypt, who was under Turkish suzerainty, to control the African ports along the coast of the Red Sea on behalf of Turkey. This forced Egypt to embark on the occupation of the northern Somali coast and inland up to Harar; but in 1885 Egyptian forces withdrew. This decision was prompted by internal and external factors pertaining to Egyptian security and independence.

The combination of both internal and external motives prompted the competition of three European colonial powers (Great Britain, France and Italy) for the colonization of the Somali Peninsula. After acquiring Aden in 1939, Great Britain became very much interested in the northern Somali regions due to the poverty of Aden in terms of its resources, making its garrison dependent on the supplies of meat from northern Somaliland. After



the signing of treaties from 1881 to 1886 with Somali chiefs and sheikhs, the northern region was declared a British protectorate, to be known as Protectorate of British Somaliland. Although Somaliland and its people fell under British protection after these treaties, the British government betrayed Somali interests by entering into another treaty with Ethiopia in 1897. They transferred a large tract of Somali territory known as "Haud and Reserved Areas" to Ethiopia without the Somali people being consulted or informed.

At the beginning of the 18th Century, the southern coast of the country was occupied by a certain Salim Al Samimi for the Sultan of Oman. In 1889 Italy arrived at the Somali coast along the Indian Ocean and signed treaties with the Somali sultans who placed their territory under Italian protection. Soon after Italy succeeded in her acquisition of the Benadir coasts from the Sultan of Zanzibar (who was also heir at the same time to the Sultan of Oman), its authority extended from the Gulf of Aden in the north to Kisimayo in the south. Because of this unjust state of affairs, As-Sayid Mohamed Abdulle Hassan formed a powerful Somali nationalist movement known as the "Dervishes" in the eastern part of the country. He declared an all-out war to oppose the institution of a colonial system on his motherland. He fought a tough and sporadic war for over 20 long years to emancipate his country from the shackles of foreign rule.

The British government, having found that Sayid Mohamed Abdulle Hassan was a man to be reckoned with, brought expeditionary forces from India, Nyasaland (Malawi), Kenya, and the Sudan to

fight against this nationalist movement. Meanwhile, Italian and Ethiopian forces assisted in the campaigns so as to prevent this movement from spreading into other parts of the Somali territories that they had already occupied.

Heavy losses were suffered by all sides during the 20-year war, and in 1920 Hassan was overcome. He was never caught by his enemies; died a natural death, and was buried at Imey, on Somali land that is held by Ethiopia at present. Meanwhile, Italian colonialism in the southern regions of Somalia met a lot of resistance that led to the formation of several liberation movements, among which was the famous Somali Youth League. As a result of their determined struggle, in 1948 a United Nations Four-Power Commission (consisting of the United States of America, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union) was sent from New York to visit Somalia and to ascertain the wishes of the Somali people.

On November 21, 1949, the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly passed a resolution approving a 10-year Trusteeship Administration with Italy appointed to an Administration Authority under an Advisory Council (composed of Egypt, the Philippines, and Colombia) in order to lead Somalia to independence within this period.

On the other side in the northern region, following a political struggle waged by the people there, the British ended their rule over the country and granted it independence on June 26, 1960. Only five days later, on July 1, 1960, it merged with the UN Trust Territory of Somali to form the present Republic.<sup>1</sup>

# ENDNOTES

1. Somali Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report 1986, pp. 9-12.